

Message Text

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70

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8912

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 7108

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, JO

SUBJECT: ISRAELI PLANS FOR GREATER AUTONOMY ON WEST BANK

REF: TEL AVIV 6710

SUMMARY: SEVERAL ISRAELIS CONCERNED WITH WEST BANK AFFAIRS CONSIDER MOST RECENT REMARKS BY DEFMIN PERES ON PROSPECTS FOR SELF-RULE (AT BEIT JALA OCT 20 - REFTEL) ILL- CONCEIVED AND POORLY TIMED. ADVERSE ARAB REACTION APPEARS TO HAVE CREATED TEMPORARY BARRIER TO FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF PLANS FOR GREATER AUTONOMY, WHICH NEVERTHELESS CONTINUE TO RECEIVE ATTENTION AT LEAST IN MFA AND MILITARY GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY .

1. ISRAELI OFFICIALS WHOSE DUTIES INCLUDE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OCCUPIED TERRITORIES HAVE WXPRESSED VIEW THAT PERES'S BEIT JALA STATEMENT WAS ILL-TIMED AND CONSENSUS WAS THAT, AS RESULT OF ADVERSE ARAB REACTION, SELF-RULE IDEA HAS ONCE AGAIN BEEN PLACED ON BACK

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BURNER.

2. MFA CHEF DE CABINET AND SPECIALIST IN PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS (KAHANA) DESCRIBED CURRENT SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO WEST BANK AUTONOMY BY SAYING THAT INHABITANTS UNDERSTAND THAT THEY HAVE "LINE OF CREDIT" AGAINST WHICH THEY CAN DRAW VARYING AMOUNTS OF SELF-ADMINISTRATION IF AND WHEN THEY ARE READY. HE ADDED THAT FONMIN ALLON REMAINED ACTIVELY INTERESTED IN TRYING TO PROVIDE MEANS BY WHICH ARAB RESIDENTS COULD PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY IN ADMINISTRATION OF WEST BANK, BUT HAD NOT HAD PRIOR NOTIFICATION THAT BEIT JALA STATEMENT WOULD BE MADE. KAHANA MENTIONED THAT MFA BUREAUCRACY HAD BEEN INVOLVED, TOGETHER WITH MILITARY GOVERNMENT, IN DRAWING UP LIMITED PLAN OF ACTION WHICH WAS TO HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED QUIETLY WITH WEST BANK LEADERS. HE REGRETTED THAT STRONG ADVERSE ARAB REACTION WHICH PERES' REMARKS PROVOKED WOULD PROBABLY MEAN THAT SUCH PLANS WOULD BE SHELVED AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING.

3. MFA OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AFFAIRS (ARIEL) CALLED PERES' REMARKS IN BEIT JALA "A BAD MISTAKE." TO INTEREST QUALIFIED WEST BANK ARABS IN PARTICIPATING MORE FULLY IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THEIR OWN AFFAIRS IS NOT EASY UNDER BEST OF CONDITIONS AND IS COMPLICATED BY PUBLICITY SUCH AS THAT AROUSED BY PERES' APPEARANCE.

4. SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO MINISTER OF POLICE FOR OCCUPIED TERRITORIES (DANON) SURMISED THAT PERES WAS RECEIVING "VERY BAD ADVICE." HE CALLED ATTENTION IN PARTICULAR TO FACT THAT PERES HAD MADE STATEMENT IN CHRISTIAN TOWN AND HAD PROVOKED INEVITABLE PUBLIC REACTION FROM MAJORITY OF BEIT JALA WHICH WOULD MAKE IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO AGREE IN FUTURE EVEN TO CONSIDER IDEA OF GREATER AUTONOMY.

5. COMMENT: WORKING-LEVEL BUREAUCRACY, AT LEAST IN MFA AND MIL GOVT, APPARENTLY REMAINS CONVINCED THAT SUITABLE MEANS CAN BE FOUND TO INTEREST WEST BANKERS IN SOME DEGREE OF ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY IF ONLY CONFIDENTIAL

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POLITICIANS COULD REFRAIN FROM PUBLICIZING ISSUE. THEY MAY WELL BE QUIETLY ENCOURAGED IN THIS BELIEF BY THOSE WEST BANKERS WHO TELL ISRAELIS WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR, FOR EXAMPLE THAT INFLUENCE OF PLO ON WEST BANK IS ON THE WANE WHILE THAT OF HASHEMITES IS RISING. IN ANY CASE, WE CAN EXPECT TO HEAR MORE ABOUT WEST BANK AUTONOMY IN THE FUTURE.
TOON

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